



DEMOCRATS' POWER GRAB PLAYBOOK

Democrats are leveraging their slim congressional majority and White House control to secure permanent political power. Under the guise of “democracy reform,”¹ Democrats’ “legislative” priorities would restructure Congress to suppress party opposition and destroy American democracy as we know it.

Restructuring Congress – the First Step to Single-Party Rule²

- Rescinding Minority Procedural Rights – According to Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), the Democrats’ 117th Congress rule changes³ “enable[es] the most significant power grab in the history of Congress, leaving our constituents’ voices shut out of the real lawmaking progress” and “disregards rights of the minority at all levels...that will have lasting consequences for our institution.”⁴
 - Limiting the Motion to Recommit (MTR) – Democrats gutted a centuries-old tool dating back from the first Congress to prevent bills from being amended on the floor in a bipartisan manner. This change comes in response to Republicans successfully using the MTR eight times in the last Congress.
 - Voting by Proxy – Despite every Democrat voting in person for Speaker Pelosi, including one with COVID, the rules permit Members to stay home, cast votes on ten other Members’ behalf, and extends remote Committee proceedings. This consolidates Democrat leadership influence by sidelining rank-and-file and minority Members from participating in negotiations.⁵
 - Creating New PAYGO Exemptions – Allows the Chair of the Budget Committee to waive rules requiring bills to pay for themselves if the Chair decides the bill is pandemic-related or designed to combat climate change. This subjective power makes it easier to pass deficit-busting partisan priorities.⁶
- Blocking Reading of Bills – Democrats are denying Americans the opportunity to hear what is in their partisan proposals⁷ by declaring bills “considered read.” This is meant to keep citizens in the dark by preventing the clerk from being able to read the bill aloud on the House floor.
- Eliminating the Filibuster – Removes the Senate 60-vote threshold for passing legislation that is being filibustered, eroding the Senate’s role as a deliberative body. In 2020, the Senate Democrat minority used the filibuster 327 times to block legislation.⁸ By eliminating this rule, Democrats could ram through a partisan progressive agenda and squash the voice of the minority. *Politico* reports Democrat leadership has considered a filibuster “carve out” plan to ram through portions of H.R. 1 and other voting reform legislation, for example.⁹
- Reinstating Earmarks – Incentivizes Democrat leadership to buy off support for their partisan agenda across their slim majority, further consolidating their power.

Restructuring the Country – Cementing Democrats’ Absolute Power¹⁰

- H.R. 1 – This progressive priority wish list represents a Democrat power seizure by nationalizing elections and imposing institutional advantages for Democrat campaigns. As Sen. Cruz (R-TX) stated, H.R. 1 would “[change] elections forever so Democrats never lose.”

- Ranking Member Rodney Davis (R-IL) released a list of the “Top Ten Most Egregious Provisions of H.R. 1” that prioritized the interest of politicians over the people in February 2021.¹¹
- Establishing D.C. and Puerto Rico Statehood – Frustrated by the equal representation of rural and smaller states, H.R. 51, the Washington D.C. Admission Act, would secure two Senate seats and a seat in the House of Representatives for Democrats. Democrats may similarly consider statehood for Puerto Rico to ensure permanent Democratic rule. The leftist group Indivisible describes this strategy as a top priority to “Fix the Senate” and “Save Our Democracy.”¹² (*RPC has released a D.C. statehood policy brief, entitled “D.C. Statehood for Democrat Rule.”*¹³).
 - Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY) states, “D.C. statehood is all about Speaker Pelosi and liberal democrats consolidating their power to enact radical policies nationwide like the Green New Deal, packing the Supreme Court, and eliminating the filibuster.”¹⁴
- Executive Order Overreach – With the stroke of a pen, President Biden expanded administrative state power to an historic level, by signing more Executive Orders (EO) in his first two weeks of office than President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his first month.¹⁵ These EO’s carry the force of law over matters of climate change, immigration, education, and energy, with no congressional input. These EO’s have already cost thousands of U.S. jobs. (*RPC has released two new policy briefs on regulatory overreach, entitled “Biden’s Return to Hyper-Regulation,” and the “Congressional Review Act”*).¹⁶
- Court Packing – Democrats are considering a radical restructuring of the Supreme Court following the successful confirmation of Justice Barrett. In 2020, Democrats incorporated “structural court reforms” in their party platform.¹⁷ The Biden Administration’s proposed Judicial Review Commission represents a blatant political power grab to influence Court rulings and destroy our system of checks and balances.

As Thomas Jefferson stated in his First Inaugural Address in 1801, “bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect and to violate would be oppression.”¹⁸ If successful, Democrats’ institutional reforms will entrench their permanent single-party rule and impose the permanent oppression of those who disagree.

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¹Democrats believe they cannot win unless they achieve structural reform to impose institutional advantages.

<https://indivisible.org/democracy-guide> and <https://crooked.com/articles/democracy-reform-trumpism/>

² <https://apnews.com/article/legislation-coronavirus-pandemic-nancy-pelosi-fce0c1079db207aaa15d146e19ab4f2d> and <https://www.heritage.org/political-process/commentary/new-radical-rules-new-radical-congress>

³ H.Res. 8 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-resolution/8>

⁴ <https://www.republicanleader.gov/biggest-power-grab-in-the-history-of-congress/>

⁵ https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/Step-by-Step_Remote_Floor_Voting.pdf and <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/542862-house-democrats-open-to-making-proxy-voting-the-new-normal>

⁶ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-rules-paygo-green-new-deal>

⁷ For example https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/Rule_SAH1319.pdf and https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/Rule_HR1620HR6HR1603HR1868HJRes17.pdf

⁸ <https://twitter.com/johnrobertsFox/status/1375471429660127236> and <https://gop.com/the-democrats-filibuster-hypocrisy/>

⁹ Sen. Manchin (D-WV) has stated that he opposes the proposal for filibuster “carve outs” for specific legislation, at the time of this brief. <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/17/biden-filibuster-fight-476684>; <https://twitter.com/sarahnferris/status/1372218278186205188>; <https://twitter.com/burgessev/status/1372218039047966725>; <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/playbook/2021/03/16/progressives-dems->

[must-choose-between-black-voters-and-the-filibuster-492121](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/25/voting-rights-filibuster-477905) <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/25/voting-rights-filibuster-477905>;
and <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/17/white-house-filibuster-reform-476900>
¹⁰ https://www.wsj.com/articles/pelosis-top-priority-consolidating-power-11610667245?mod=searchresults_pos14&page=1&utm_source=2019+House+GOP+Staff+List&utm_campaign=894605381f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_01_29_06_11_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a8407dc016-894605381f-147384861 and
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/28/us/politics/democrats-filibuster-supreme-court-biden.html>
¹¹ https://mcusercontent.com/67fba463240fdd948eb636b35/files/922cd618-969a-4bbd-a8f9-a41d3bd50f28/HR_1_Top_Ten_Problems.02.pdf
¹² <https://indivisible.org/democracy-guide>
¹³ <https://republicanpolicy.house.gov/policy-guides/policy-briefs>
¹⁴ <https://republicans-oversight.house.gov/release/comer-democrats-dc-statehood-bill-is-an-unconstitutional-political-power-grab/>
¹⁵ FDR held the previous record for Executive Orders. <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/03/963380189/with-28-executive-orders-signed-president-biden-is-off-to-a-record-start>
¹⁶ <https://republicanpolicy.house.gov/policy-guides/policy-briefs>
¹⁷ <https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-07-31-Democratic-Party-Platform-For-Distribution.pdf> and
<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/01/27/biden-supreme-court-reform-463126>
¹⁸ The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 33: 17 February to 30 April 1801. (Princeton University Press, 2006), 148-52.
<https://jeffersonpapers.princeton.edu/selected-documents/first-inaugural-address-0>